

♠♥♦♣ AN IMPROBABLE SLAM ♠♥♦♣

East deals and passes. This is your lovely hand:

S	South
♠	AQJ5
♥	AJ94
♦	7
♣	AJ54

You have a "One-Triple Four" with 17HCP. You wished your Diamond singleton was a high honor so you could open 1NT and show your strength in the opening bid. But, 1NT with a low singleton is illegal under current ACBL rules. You open 1♣.

West overcalls 1♥ and your partner responds 2♦. East passes and it's back to you. You wanted to be in notrump and now that partner has shown stoppers in Diamonds, you jump to 3NT. All goes well until partner rebids 6♦!

You are thinking about 6NT, but partner could have bid that himself. He thinks slam is a possibility but warned you off of a notrump slam. You pass and 6♦ becomes the final contract.

East leads the ♥6. Take over for North and figure out how you are going to take 12 tricks:

S	South
♠	AQJ5
♥	AJ94
♦	7
♣	AJ54

East Leads: ♥6

N	North
♠	8
♥	1085
♦	AQJ96432
♣	K

You count 5 top tricks and you can take 6 more Diamonds even if the Diamond finesse loses. You still need 1 more trick.

One thing you know, right off, is that the ♥6 lead is a singleton since West needed 5 Hearts for his overcall. That means you can't let West get the lead before you remove East's trump. Therefore, you win the first lead with the ♥A.

There is a chance for an extra Spade trick by virtue of a Spade finesse. But the odds are less than 50%. West overcalled without the ♥A nor with many honors in Diamonds or Clubs. Therefore, he is more apt to hold the ♠K for his bid.

A much more likely holding for West is the ♠K and shortage in Spades, since his partner has a singleton Heart and shortage in Diamonds. He probably has length in Spades and Clubs. Your singleton Spade offers the nearly 100% play of a ruffing finesse in Spades.

You would like to first draw the outstanding trump, trying the finesse against the ♦K at the same time. But you can't afford to do that. If the the Diamond finesse loses to East, he will return a Club and take out one of your vital entries to your Dummy to cash the ♣A. You must immediately lead the ♠A, followed by the ♠Q. If West ducks, you will discard a Heart and you've taken your extra trick; if West covers with the ♠K, you ruff and your ♠J becomes your 12th trick. If West ducks the second spade, you are sure he has only the ♠K left in his hand. You lead the ♠5 and ruff West's ♠K, saving the ♠J for another Spade trick after the trump are drawn.

You are in your hand and you cannot reach the Dummy to finesse the Diamonds, but since you now have 2 extra Spade tricks, you can afford to lose to the ♦K. You play the ♦A and ♦Q from you hand. East wins the ♦K and leads the Club.

This is the key play. You can't play low from the dummy and win the ♣K. There will be no way to reach the critical ♠J, if you do. You must go up with the ♣A and smother your ♣K. Now, you can take the ♠J and discard your last Heart. The rest of your cards and diamonds and you claim your 6♦ contract.

The play, here, is a little complex and may be hard to visualize. You can see it played out by using the link to the hand, below:

This is the entire deal:

14 ^p	N North	W N E S
	♠ 8 ♥ 1085 ♦ AQJ96432 ♣ K	1♥ 2♦ P 1♠ P 6♦ P P P
W West	E East	
♠ K93 ♥ KQ732 ♦ 85 ♣ 863	♠ 107642 ♥ 6 ♦ K10 ♣ Q10972	
	S South	
	♠ AQJ5 ♥ AJ94 ♦ 7 ♣ AJ54	6♦ N NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/zzuwgazd> , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own. <https://tinyurl.com/2p3hmb44>

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